

12 Days in Skardu, Hunza and Gilgit -Shangri-La Discovered

Day 1 Islamabad - Chilas: Depart Islamabad early and drive through Haripur and Mansera to join the Karakoram Highway (KKH) at Thakot. The KKH is a marvel of modern engineering and winds over 700 kms through breathtaking mountain terrain. Shortly after Thakot we will stop to view the FWO monument before arriving at Besham. After a short rest, proceed further up on the KKH through the towns Pattan and Dassu before reaching Chilas, our overnight stop (driving time approximately 10-12 hours). Overnight at the hotel.

Day 2 Chilas - Skardu: An early start will see us pass the village of Jaglot and from near here if the weather is clear we will get great views of Naga Parbat at 8126m, the 9th highest mountain in the world. Continue this interesting drive as our road hugs the mountain side, with sheer drops down to the Indus River below. Arrive Skardu and check in to our hotel (driving time approx 8-10 hours).

Day 3 Skardu: After a relaxed breakfast, begin the tour with a visit of historical Kharpocho Fort that was built by Ali Sher Khan the most celebrated ruler of the Anchan Dynasty. After enjoying the vista from the Fort's vantage point, continue on to visit Skardu bazaar and, if open, the small K-2 museum before returning for overnight at the hotel.

Day 4 Skardu – Deosai - Khaplu: This morning set out for Deosai Park, at an average elevation of 4,114m making it one of the highest plateaus in the world. The park protects an area of 3,000 square kilometers and is well known for its rich flora and fauna. On the way, visit Sadpara Lake now transformed into a dam and also visit the huge image of Manthal Buddha dating from the 9th century AD. Afterwards take a dramatic drive to Khaplu and on arrival check in to our hotel

Day 5 Macholo excursion: Today visit Macholo valley where you will be surrounded by spectacular mountain scenery, and orchards of cherry, apricot and apple trees. Enroute one will also have a view of the uniquely shaped Masherbrum Peak (7,821meters). Wander around the area before returning to the hotel. In the late afternoon take a walking tour of the Khaplu Palace, the village and the Khanqah (a place of spiritual retreat). Overnight at the hotel.

Day 6 Khaplu - Shigar: Begin with a morning transfer to Shigar. After checking in take an hour's hike up to Kari Dong where the first fortress of this small fiefdom was built. Besides the remains of the Fort one can see the ruins of an old mosque, a Buddhist Monastery and various inscriptions dating from the 5th century AD. Return to Shigar for a walking tour of the 14th century Amburiq Mosque, the bazaar and the restored Khanqah. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 7 Shigar - Karimabad, Hunza: Depart Baltistan driving back to Skardu and then following the Hargissa River. Continue driving westwards towards Gilgit through the Rondu Gorge following the mighty Indus before joining the Karakoram Highway and arriving at Karimabad, Hunza. Overnight at the hotel. Note this will be a long 11 to 12-hour day (depending on road work).

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Day 8 Karimabad: Today will be an easy day and we begin this morning by visiting the 800-year-old Baltit Fort, once the stronghold of the Ayasho Dynasty, and now a restored museum that has won many awards. We then take a few minutes' drive to the neighbouring village of Altit. Here we will visit the restored Altit Fort and the women's work shop where they make wooden furniture and handicrafts. Return to the hotel for the rest of the day at leisure to take in the magnificent views of the valley and Rakaposhi. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 9 Karimabad - Gulmit - Passu: Begin with a dawn drive to the Duikar summer settlement to have a breathtaking view of sunrise over the lofty peaks of Hunza. Thereafter, drive to Gulmit in Upper Hunza, along the banks of the newly, but tragically formed Attabad Lake, on a road link that has been recently restored by a 7.9 km long tunnel system. Gulmit is a peaceful and serene village that formerly served as winter capital of the Hunza Kingdom. Here one will walk through the village and commence a traversing hike to Borit Lake, across the the Gulkin glacier (approx 3 hours). From the lake drive to Passu Village where we will check in to the hotel.

Day 10 Passu – Khunjerab Pass - Gilgit: From Passu, enjoy views of TupupdanSar, Passu Peaks, Shispare and Boyohagur, all exceeding 7000 meters. Drive today to the Khunjerab Pass (Pak - China Border) at an elevation 4,693m or 15,397 feet. Here in this National Park reside, amongst other animals, the snow leopard, Himalayan Ibex, Marco Polo sheep and the Golden Marmot. After enjoying the vistas, we take the return drive to Gilgit, pausing at the foot of Rakaposhi Peak for tea. The view of this North Face allows one to see the longest un-interrupted mountain flank on earth (6000m), starting from the river bank. Upon arrival at Gilgit, transfer to the hotel.

Day 11 Gilgit: Visit Gilgit by first going to the Kargah Buddha rock carving, which was carved in the 7th century. There was a monastery and three stupas here as this served as a rest stop for Buddhist pilgrims. From here we will go to the Gilgit Bazaar, the Chinar Bagh, see Asia's longest vehicular suspension bridge and end the tour at the Chinese cemetery, the final resting place for Chinese workers who died during the construction of the Karakoram Highway in the 1970's. Return to the hotel to enjoy the wonderful views. Overnight at the hotel

Day 12 Gilgit - Islamabad: After an early start, depart for your return journey to Islamabad via the KKH (12-16 hours depending on road condition) or via Naran (12-14 hours) or by air (airfare not included in the price).

END OF OUR SERVICES